

# A Comparison in Secondary Music Education between Italy and America

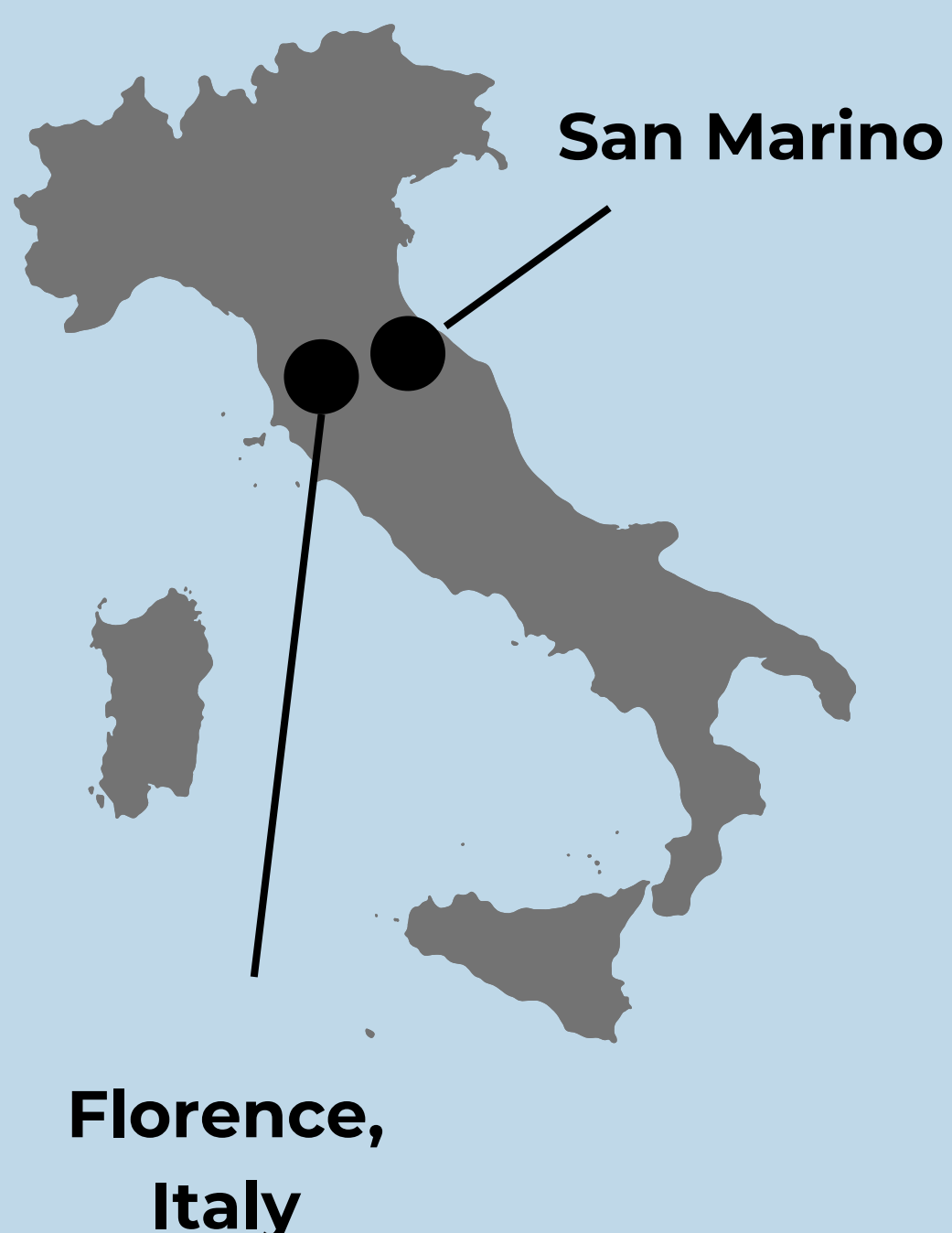


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**M**y Burch Fellowship was born from my time in Florence on my study abroad program on musical perspectives. Music in Italy is a way of life. Music breathes within the fabric of the cities and grows within the culture of the Italian people. The central focus of my fellowship was a comparison of the teaching of music in Italian versus American secondary schools. My project was composed of two main locations and institutions; Il Trillo School of Music, Florence; and the San Marino Institute of Music in the Republic of San Marino.

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The first week for me began right as Il Trillo was presenting their class final concerts: saggio musica (music essay, or final exam). These were students ranging from very young to very old performing on a variety of instruments from piano to drums. It was an experience designed for people to practice performing, to fall in love with the feeling of expressing themselves through music. Often in America, and in life, we think unless we start at an early age, learning new things like an instrument, are unobtainable and a waste of time. This was very different from the students I met at Il Trillo.

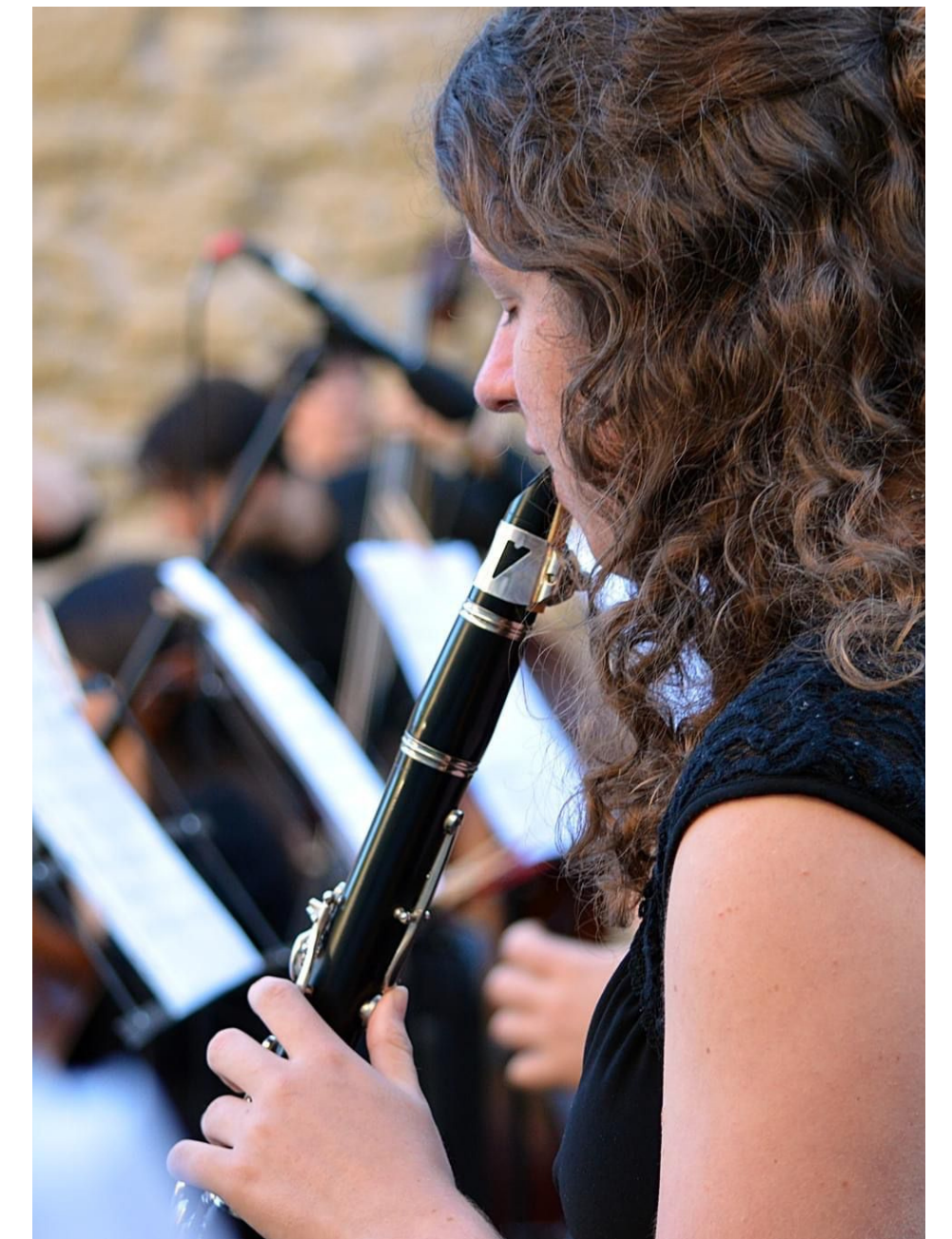


Next, I went on my first trip to San Marino to the San Marino Conservatory and performed with their orchestra. Concert performance was something I had been doing for years and, despite being halfway across the world, I found comfort and



familiarity in the pattern of performance. My second and final trip to San Marino I was asked to lead a rehearsal in Italian, make connections with the students, and conduct the concert that ended with an explosion of applause. This was it; this was what I was meant to do. Returning invigorated to Florence, I was involved in a huge program at Il Trillo: the Korean Music Festival. In the practice rooms there were translators and three languages, English, Italian, and Korean; but only one music, and it was understood by all. The last big event of my fellowship experience was my performance of Adagio from Mozart's Clarinet Concerto. The wonderful thing about being a musician, and something I really learned on this fellowship, was communication through music and body language. I was completely out of my comfort zone going into the rehearsals, but throughout this

project, I had to become comfortable with the uncomfortable. So, I adapted; I learned, and I was able to successfully perform a concerto in Florence.



What this fellowship experience did was prove to me how much I can do when I set my mind to something. It showed me how capable I am of creating a sense of home, overcoming language barriers, and how ready I am to enter the real world. In Italy, life is about the pleasures that come along with living. The beautiful thing about Florence and Italy is that the music is so ingrained in their lifestyle that I did not even have to search for my research, it came to me.

